

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An isolated DNA molecule consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1.
2. An isolated polynucleotide comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, or
5 degenerate variants of SEQ ID NO: 1.
3. An isolated polynucleotide comprising the complement nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, or degenerate variants of SEQ ID NO: 1.
4. An isolated polynucleotide as described in claim 2, comprising a fragment of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, or degenerate variants of SEQ ID NO: 1.
- 10 5. An isolated polynucleotide as described in claim 3, comprising a fragment of the complement nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO 1, or degenerate variants of SEQ ID NO: 1.
6. The isolated polynucleotide described in claims 4 or 5, wherein said fragment comprises
15 a number of consecutive nucleotides selected from the group consisting of at least 10 consecutive nucleotides, at least 11 consecutive nucleotides, at least 12 consecutive nucleotides, at least 13 consecutive nucleotides, at least 14 consecutive nucleotides, at least 15 consecutive nucleotides, at least 16 consecutive nucleotides, at least 17 consecutive nucleotides, at least 18 consecutive nucleotides, at least 19 consecutive nucleotides, at least 20 consecutive nucleotides, at least 21 consecutive nucleotides, at
20 least 22 consecutive nucleotides, and at least 23 consecutive nucleotides.
7. An isolated polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence at least 80% identical to SEQ ID NO: 1, or complement thereof.

8. An isolated polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence, or complement thereof, defined by polymerase chain reaction using a primer pair set forth in SEQ ID NO: 2 and SEQ ID NO: 3.

9. An isolated polynucleotide as described in claim 8, comprising a fragment of said nucleotide sequence defined by polymerase chain reaction using said primer pair set forth in SEQ ID NO: 2 and SEQ ID NO: 3, or complement thereof.

10. The isolated polynucleotide described in claim 9, wherein said fragment comprises a number of consecutive nucleotides selected from the group consisting of at least 10 consecutive nucleotides, at least 11 consecutive nucleotides, at least 12 consecutive nucleotides, at least 13 consecutive nucleotides, at least 14 consecutive nucleotides, at least 15 consecutive nucleotides, at least 16 consecutive nucleotides, at least 17 consecutive nucleotides, at least 18 consecutive nucleotides, at least 19 consecutive nucleotides, at least 20 consecutive nucleotides, at least 21 consecutive nucleotides, at least 22 consecutive nucleotides, and at least 23 consecutive nucleotides.

15 11. A single-stranded nucleic acid comprising a nucleotide sequence that hybridizes under stringent conditions to said polynucleotide having the sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, or complement thereof.

12. An antisense oligonucleotide comprising a sequence of at least eight nucleotides complementary to a region between nucleotides 1 and 404 of SEQ ID NO: 1.

20 13. The antisense oligonucleotide of claim 12, wherein the oligonucleotide comprises at least 3 nucleotides.

14. An isolated polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence that hybridizes under stringent conditions to a hybridization probe the nucleotide sequence of which consists of SEQ ID NO: 1, or complement thereof.

25 15. The isolated polynucleotide described in claim number 14, wherein said hybridization

probe is fragment of SEQ ID NO: 1 at least 20 nucleotides in length.